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NUMBER 85-61**

**THE SITUATION AND PROSPECTS
IN CUBA**

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 28 November 1961. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

*Approved for Release
Date 1 Oct 1961*

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THE SITUATION AND PROSPECTS IN CUBA¹

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the internal situation in Cuba and the present trends affecting the stability of the regime.

THE ESTIMATE

Summary

1. The Castro regime has sufficient popular support and repressive capabilities to cope with any internal threat likely to develop within the foreseeable future. The regime faces serious, but not insurmountable, economic difficulties. The contrast between its roseate promises and the grim actuality is causing increasing dissatisfaction and disillusionment, which, however, are manifesting themselves more in widespread apathy and resignation than in active resistance. There has been some recent increase in small-scale guerrilla activity and sabotage. Nevertheless, the bulk of the population accepts the regime as the effective government in being, or is at least resigned to it for want of a feasible alternative. The regime retains the positive support of at least a quarter of the population, and the enthusiastic support of substantial numbers of zealots. At the same time, the regime's reorganization of its political system and its military forces is increasing its capabilities for control. This political reorganization will enhance the position of Blas Roca and the Communist Party in Cuba.

¹ A full-scale estimate of the Cuban situation and prospects is scheduled for completion in January.

The Economic Situation and Prospects

2. The Cuban economy is now feeling the impact of three revolutionary changes: (a) the loss of experienced middle and upper level managerial and technical talent; (b) the imposition of elaborate state control; and (c) a drastic shift in the trading pattern, from primary dependence on the US to primary dependence on the Soviet Bloc. The elimination of the US quota for Cuban sugar has deprived Cuba of its major source of dollar income. The US embargo has also produced economic difficulties, especially through the denial of spare parts for previously acquired equipment, almost all of which was of US origin. Nevertheless, the production of sugar, tobacco, and tropical fruits, the leading exports, has been maintained.² Although Cuba's free world trade has declined sharply and foreign exchange reserves have been exhausted, the Bloc is taking enough exports (including most of Cuba's sugar) and

² In 1961 the production of sugar was sharply increased, to 8.5 million tons, as compared with a range of 5.3 to 5.8 million over the four preceding years. This was the result of a government decision to cut all available cane, which is not usually done, and did not represent an increase in production capacity. This extraordinary effort is not to be repeated in 1962, and production for that year will probably be at the normal level.

returning enough goods and machinery to keep the economy going.

3. Nevertheless, the economy has felt the loss of imports of foodstuffs and consumer goods from the US. Personal consumption has declined, especially in the cities, and most drastically in the case of the upper and middle classes. In a few rural areas, however, living conditions have been substantially improved, particularly in terms of housing and sanitation. These examples of the tangible benefits received by some keep alive the hopes of many others.

4. In addition to trade, the Bloc has extended to Cuba some \$357 million in credits for industrial development. However, only a few of these development projects are yet underway and not much is likely to be accomplished for another year or more.

5. In general, the Cuban economy is now characterized by major shortages and considerable disorganization. Although the regime is making some progress in dealing with organizational problems, no great improvement in the economy is likely through 1962. In view of the availability of Bloc assistance, however, we do not believe that the economy will deteriorate so far as to bring about Castro's overthrow or force him to make basic changes in his policy. On the contrary, the situation will probably begin to improve slowly after a year or so, as the new Communist-type organization takes hold, managerial experience increases, and foreign trade is adjusted to new channels.

Popular Acceptance of the Regime

6. Initially, almost all Cubans hailed the triumph of the Revolution with enthusiasm. Disillusionment, however, came quickly to the urban middle class, urban organized labor, and the landed gentry. With the passage of time, more and more people have become discontent on account of economic hardships and the regime's totalitarian methods. Disaffection has spread to include small peasant proprietors, who for some time were among the regime's most ardent supporters. It is significant that even a few humbler folk

are appearing in the flow of refugees from Cuba.

7. The severe internal repression which accompanied the defeat of the April invasion stilled, for a time, all manifestations of opposition within the country. In recent months, however, there have been increasing manifestations of popular disaffection. These generally take the form of passive resistance, such as absenteeism, but in September Catholic crowds dared to defy openly the regime's prohibition of certain public religious observances. Gunfire had to be used to disperse these spontaneous public demonstrations.

8. Manifestations of organized active resistance to the regime—sabotage and guerrilla operations—have also begun to increase as various internal resistance groups have recovered from the blow dealt them in April. These activities, however, are on a very small scale. They have tended to shift from urban areas to the countryside, taking advantage of increasing rural dissatisfaction and the limitations upon the regime's repressive capabilities in rural areas.

9. On the other hand, the internal resistance groups remain primarily on the defensive. Their capabilities and their morale are impaired by their inability to obtain from abroad the means to carry on active sabotage and guerrilla operations. If such aid were forthcoming, the scale of internal resistance activity could certainly be increased. In view of the regime's repressive capabilities, however, it is highly improbable that an extensive popular uprising against it could be fomented. The opposition groups in exile do not represent a serious threat to the regime.

10. Disaffected Cubans tend to think primarily in terms of escape rather than of active resistance. In mid-September, some 15,000 had completed legal arrangements to leave the country (which were then cancelled by the government) and some 500 were in asylum in the several Latin American embassies in Havana. Illegal departures occur almost daily.

11. Despite these manifestations of disaffection, the regime still commands substantial

popular support. Its complete control of communications media enables it to saturate the country with its propaganda. Its proliferation of front organizations enables it to commit the bulk of the population to some identification with it, and to carry on a program of indoctrination. The sprawling revolutionary bureaucracy now embodies a new class with a very personal stake in the regime.

12. In sum, the bulk of the population accepts the regime as the effective government in being, with which it must learn to live, or is at least resigned to it for want of a feasible alternative. These people may be in varying degrees disillusioned and depressed, but active resistance cannot be expected of them in present circumstances. Meanwhile, the regime retains the positive support of at least a quarter of the population, and the enthusiastic support of substantial numbers of zealots.

Castroist Political Organization

13. The regime is now in the process of completely reorganizing the form of government in Cuba, and is developing a new totalitarian political party to operate and control it. The Communist model is apparent in both instances.

14. The traditional provincial and municipal governments are being replaced by *juntas* for "coordination, execution, and inspection" (JUCEI). Already established in each province of Cuba, the JUCEI consists of a "provincial congress," representative of all major economic entities in the territory, which meets occasionally; a "plenum" of the congress, which meets every few months; and several smaller bodies which meet frequently and actually direct the provincial administration. The primary function of all JUCEI is the local implementation of plans received from higher authority.

15. The new totalitarian political machine is to be the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution, a merger of the amorphous 26 of July Movement (or what is left of it) with the well-organized Communist Party. Although Castro is of course to be the supreme head of this party, the man who is pushing

the project is Blas Roca, the Secretary General of the Communist Party. Party membership is to be limited to the elite of the revolutionary struggle and will be prerequisite for appointment to any important political or economic position. The new organization will enhance the already extensive Communist control of Cuban institutions and the influence of Roca on policy.

16. An important arm of the Castroist political organization is the Association of Rebel Youth (AJR). It is based on the previous Communist youth organization and now numbers some 150,000 members. Many of these teenagers are of the type which elsewhere is found in juvenile gangs. The recognition and status accorded them by the regime makes them fanatical in its service. The AJR plays an active role in political indoctrination in the schools. Many of its members are active in the militia (paragraphs 17-20) and in the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (paragraph 26). Active participation in the AJR is becoming prerequisite for educational advancement and eventual political preferment.

The Military Establishment

17. The Cuban ground forces are also in the process of a thorough reorganization designed to enhance their effectiveness. The numerical strength of the army is declining as army personnel are absorbed into the militia as cadres. At the same time, there has developed within the militia a differentiation between various categories of units. Thus the meaningful distinction is no longer that between the army and the militia, but rather that between regular (full-time), ready reserve, and homeguard-type units. On this basis, the ground forces available to the regime to suppress insurrection or repel invasion are estimated to be as follows:

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| a. Regular forces (army and militia) | 75,000 |
| b. Ready reserve (part-time militia) | 100,000 |
| c. Homeguard (part-time militia) | 100,000 |

18. The regular forces (both army and full-time militia) have received intensive training, under the supervision of Bloc instructors, in the use of the Bloc arms with which they are now equipped. They have acquired capabilities in the employment of armor and artillery (including antiaircraft and antitank weapons) hitherto unknown in any Caribbean country. They have completed basic and unit training, to battalion level, and are now engaged in combined arms training at the battalion combat team level.

19. The ready reserve militia battalions are less heavily armed and less thoroughly trained. Each has a full-time cadre of about 130 men. The remaining personnel are available for only one or two drills a week and a month of active duty training each year. The arms are kept in the custody of the full-time cadre. Since these battalions are based on places of employment, they can be mobilized almost instantly for action in the immediate vicinity.

20. The homeguard-type militia units have no significant combat capability. Their function is to augment the police as necessary for the control of the population. It is likely that they are operationally subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior rather than to the Ministry of the Armed Forces.

21. The higher command of the ground forces has also been reorganized in a way that obviates the distinction between the army and the militia. Cuba has been divided into three self-sufficient territorial commands designated as the armies of the West, the Center, and the East. Each of these armies has operational control of all regular (full-time) and ready reserve units in its area.

22. The capabilities of the Cuban Air Force have been greatly enhanced by the acquisition of MIG aircraft and the return of personnel from training in the Bloc. There are now estimated to be 30 MIG-15's and 10 MIG-19's in Cuba, of which about half are currently operational. The present personnel strength of the air force is unknown.

23. The Cuban Navy is capable of moderately effective patrol operations along selected por-

tions of the Cuban coast, but its combat capabilities are negligible. Mutinies, defections, and purges have left it few professionally trained and technically qualified men. Its present personnel strength is composed largely of new recruits and militiamen.

24. In addition to the normal combat and security improvements described above, the regime is making extensive military preparations, such as the organization of large arms depots, tunneling, the fortification of gun emplacements around Havana, and the construction of beach defenses, apparently in anticipation of protracted warfare following a large-scale invasion. The transport and construction expenses involved in this effort represent a considerable burden to the economy.

The Castroist Internal Security Apparatus

25. Recently, the professional security agencies of the government—Army G-2 (the secret police), the National Police, and the Maritime Police—were transferred from the Ministry of the Armed Forces to the Department of State Security under the newly created Ministry of the Interior. This change is likely to enhance their effectiveness. It does not indicate a reduction of Raul Castro's power, since Ramiro Valdes, the new Minister of the Interior, is one of his close associates. Valdes is a Communist, formerly head of Army G-2.

26. A network of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution is being established to provide an additional agency for political surveillance and control. What these committees lack in professional competence, they make up for in pervasiveness and zeal. The Rebel Youth have been particularly active in promoting their formation. The announced goal is 100,000 committees with over a million members covering every community and enterprise in Cuba.

If Castro Were to Die

27. Fidel Castro's personal prestige and popularity were indispensable to the regime in the earlier stages of its development. None of his lieutenants could have inherited the

personal authority which he then exercised. His loss now, by assassination or by natural causes, would have an unsettling effect, but would almost certainly not prove fatal to the regime. The Revolution is by now well institutionalized; the regime has firm control of the country; its principal surviving leaders would probably rally together in the face of a common danger.

28. The fact remains that there have been tensions, jealousies, and conflicts of interest and purpose among Castro's principal lieutenants—Raul Castro, the head of the armed

forces, including the militia; "Che" Guevara, the director of industrial development; and Nunez Jimenez, the director of agrarian reform. These conflicts have been controlled only by Fidel Castro's personal intervention. While Castro's lieutenants would be likely to rally together in the period just after his demise, some sort of power struggle would almost certainly develop eventually. Whatever the outcome of such a struggle, Blas Roca's prospective position as boss of the United Party machine probably would significantly increase his influence and that of the Communist Party in Cuba.

DRAFT FOLLOWS

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
OFFICE OF NATIONAL

3 Nov 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Situation and Prospects in Cuba

Summary

1. The Castro regime has sufficient popular support and repressive capabilities to cope with any internal threat likely to develop within the foreseeable future. The regime faces serious, but not insurmountable, economic difficulties. The contrast between its rosy promises and the grim actuality is producing disillusionment and apathy. Some specially motivated elements have recently dared to demonstrate their disapproval. The bulk of the population, however still accepts the Castro regime, or is at least resigned to it, and substantial numbers still support it with enthusiasm. At the same time, the regime's capabilities for repression are increasing more rapidly than are the potentialities for active resistance.

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The Economic Situation and Prospects

2. The Cuban economy is now feeling the impact of three revolutionary changes: (a) the loss of most of its experienced middle and upper level managerial talent; (b) the imposition of elaborate state controls; and (c) a drastic shift in the trading pattern, from primary dependence on the US to primary dependence on the Soviet Bloc. The US embargo has produced some economic difficulties through the denial of spare parts for previously acquired equipment, almost all of which was of US origin. Nevertheless, the production of sugar, the principal export crop, has been increased, and the production of tobacco and tropical fruit, the other leading exports, has been maintained. Although Cuba's free world trade and foreign exchange reserves have declined sharply, the Bloc is taking enough exports and returning enough consumer goods and machinery to keep the economy going.

3. The domestic production of foodstuffs and other consumer goods, and the imports obtained from the Bloc and elsewhere, are together not sufficient to compensate for the loss of former imports from the US. Personal consumption has declined, especially in the cities, and most drastically in the case of the upper and middle classes. In some rural areas, however, especially in

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centers of sugar production, living conditions have been substantially improved, particularly in terms of housing and sanitation. These examples of the tangible benefits received by some keep alive the hopes of many others.

4. In addition to trade, the Bloc has extended to Cuba some \$357 million in credits for industrial development. However, only a few of these development projects are yet underway, nor is much likely to be accomplished for another year or more.

5. In general, the Cuban economy is characterized by major shortages and a high degree of disorganization. This state of affairs will continue for some time to come, and may indeed get somewhat worse. In view of the availability of Bloc assistance, however, we do not believe that the economy will deteriorate so far as to bring about Castro's overthrow, or force him to make basic changes in his policy. On the contrary, the situation will probably begin to improve within a year or so, as the new Communist-type organization takes hold, managerial experience increases, and foreign trade is adjusted to new channels.

Popular Acceptance of the Regime

6. Initially, almost all Cubans hailed the triumph of the Revolution with enthusiasm. Disillusionment, however, came quickly

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to the urban middle class, urban organized labor, and the landed gentry. It has since spread to small peasant proprietors and even to humber folk, who are beginning to appear in significant numbers in the flow of refugees from Cuba. But it is by no means

7. The severe internal repression which accompanied the defeat of the April invasion stopped, for a time, all manifestations of opposition within the country. By September, however, this effect had worn off sufficiently for Catholic crowds in Havana and other cities to dare to defy the regime's prohibition of certain public religious observances. This was the first occasion on which the regime had been forced to use gunfire to disperse hostile public demonstrations. It was therefore indicative of a significant change in the psychological situation.

8. There have also been some increase in small-scale guerrilla and sabotage activity and a considerable increase in such passive forms of resistance as absenteeism. However, most disaffected Cubans now think primarily in terms of escape. In mid-September, some 15,000 had completed legal arrangements to leave the country which were then cancelled by the government, and some 500 were in asylum in the several Latin American embassies in Havana. Illegal departures occur almost daily.

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9. Despite these manifestations of disaffection, the great bulk of the population still accepts the regime and substantial numbers still support it with enthusiasm. The sprawling revolutionary bureaucracy now embodies a new class with a very definite personal stake in the regime.

Castroist Political Organization

10. The regime is now in the process of a complete reorganization of the form of government in Cuba, and of the organization of a new totalitarian political party to operate and control it. The Communist model is apparent in both instances.

11. The traditional provincial and municipal governments are being replaced by Junta (soviets) for "coordination, execution, and inspection" (JUCEI). Already established in each province of Cuba, the JUCEI's consists of a "provincial congress," representative of all major economic entities in the territory, which meets occasionally; a "plenum" of the congress, which meets every few months; and several smaller bodies which meet frequently and actually direct the provincial administration. The primary function of all JUCEI is the local implementation of plans received from higher authority.

12. The new totalitarian political machine is to be the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution, a merger of the amorphous 26 of July Movement (or what is left of it) with the well organized Communist Party. Although Castro is of course to be the supreme head of this party, the man who is pushing the project is Blas Roca, ~~the~~ Communist Secretary General. Party membership is to be limited to the elite of the revolutionary struggle and prerequisite to appointment to any important political or economic position.

13. A significant arm of the Castroist political organization is the paramilitary Association of Rebel Youth (AJR), derived from the previous Communist youth organization. These teenagers, of the type that would be found in juvenile gangs, are a terror to their parents, their schoolmates, and the general public. They have charge of indoctrination in the schools and have been active in the formation of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (see paragraph ²² 23). Active participation in the AJR is to be prerequisite to educational and eventually political advancement.

The Castroist Security Apparatus

14. The forces now available to the regime to suppress insurrection or repel invasion are:

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- a. The Rebel Army (32,000)
- b. The Rural Police (9,600)
- c. The Rebel Air Force (2,000)
- d. The Navy (2,000)
- e. The Militia (250,000, including 83,000 women)
- f. The Rebel Youth (150,000, including 10,000 girls)
- g. The National Police (9,000)
- h. The Maritime Police

15. The administrative and command structure of these forces is extremely loose; the improvisation of ad hoc commands including disparate elements is the common practice. Confusion and lack of coordination are therefore likely in any emergency situation.

16. The army has been strengthened by the receipt of Bloc arms and is being instructed in their use by Bloc personnel. However, it has had little or no combined arms or field training. It displayed great tactical ineptitude at the time of the April landing.

17. About a fifth of the army are veterans of Castro's guerrilla struggle against Batista. The remainder are early adherents. In time, however, Castro came to doubt, with reason, their loyalty to the course the Revolution had taken on achieving

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power. The militia were therefore established as an alternative armed support for the regime. The original units were composed of Castro's most ardent followers. In time, however, the militia was so greatly expanded by recruitment under pressure that its revolutionary zeal was considerably diluted. Castro has therefore transferred his favor and reliance to the newly organized Rebel Youth, who are now his most fanatical followers.

18. In general, the militia and the Rebel Youth, both part-time forces, have only light arms which are issued to them only on occasion. They are not capable of sustained combat, but are effective for controlling and coercing the general public. In addition, some selected units of the militia and the Rebel Youth are specially armed and trained and are, in effect, army units specially dedicated to Fidel Castro.

19. The capabilities of the air force have been greatly enhanced by the acquisition of MIG aircraft and the return of personnel from training in the Bloc. There are now about 35 MIG-15's and MIG-19's operational in Cuba.

20. The navy is unreliable and distrusted; most of its personnel were taken into custody at the time of the April

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landing. Mutinies, defections, and purges have left it few professionally trained and technically qualified men.

21. Recently, the professional security agencies of the government -- Army G-2 (the Secret police), the National Police, and the Maritime Police -- were transferred from the Ministry of the Armed Forces to a newly created Ministry of the Interior. This change is likely to enhance their effectiveness. It does not indicate a reduction of Raul Castro's power, since Ramiro Valdes, the new Minister of the Interior, is one of his close associates. Valdes is a Communist, formerly head of Army G-2.

22. A network of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution is being established to provide an additional agency for political surveillance and control. What these committees lack in professional competence, they make up for in pervasiveness and zeal. The Rebel Youth have been particularly active in promoting their formation. The announced goal is 100,000 committees with over a million members covering every community in Cuba.

Is Castro Worn to Die

23. Fidel Castro's personal prestige and popularity were indispensable to the regime in the earlier stages of its development.

None of his lieutenants could have inherited the personal authority which he then exercised. His loss now, by assassination or by natural causes, would certainly have an unsettling effect, but would probably not prove fatal. The Revolution is by now well institutionalized; the regime has firm control of the country; its principal surviving leaders would probably rally together in the face of a common danger. Indeed, a dead Castro, incapable of impulsive personal interventions in the orderly administration of affairs, might be more valuable to them as a martyr than he is now.

24. The fact remains that Castro has had to control tensions, jealousies, and conflicts of interest and purpose among his principal lieutenants: Paul Castro, the head of the armed forces; "Che" Guevara, the director of industrial development; Munez Jimenez, the director of agrarian reform. There could be a falling out among them at Castro's funeral. There would almost certainly be a struggle for power among them afterward, which might break into the open.

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25. A coordinated estimate of the Cuban situation and prospects, NIE 85-62, "The Situation in Cuba," is scheduled for USIB consideration in January.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

J. G. P.
SHERMAN KENNEDY
Chairman

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